



Changes in the Entrance Rites

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The new translation of the missal that we will be using soon makes a number of changes to the parts of the Mass said or sung by the whole assembly. Several of these occur early in the Mass, during the Entrance Rites.

The first change comes right away, just after the Sign of the Cross, when we respond to the presider's greeting, "The Lord be with you." The new response is "And with your spirit." A separate bulletin insert discusses the reasons for this change.

The Penitential Rite

There are several changes in the penitential rite. The text of the Confiteor (I Confess) has been changed to match the Latin more exactly. Readers who are old enough to remember when the Mass was first celebrated in English will recognize this "new" wording which is very close to the text we used then. It puts more emphasis on our unworthiness, saying "I have greatly sinned" and "through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault."

Our current translation of this text softened down the negative tone of the prayer somewhat, probably in recognition that the prayer developed within an older piety that overstressed our sinfulness and understressed God's mercy. Originally, this was a prayer designed for the presider to express his unworthiness to approach the altar; it was never said by the assembly until the last century.

When this form of the penitential rite is used (probably most often in Lent), it will tend to make us very aware of our guilt. This is not a bad thing in itself, as long as we remember that God's grace and mercy are far greater than our sinfulness. This is really the point of the penitential rite—to remind us that we have a merciful and loving God who forgives all our sins. This gives us a good reason to give thanks to God in the Eucharist we are celebrating.

The other forms of the penitential rite achieve a better balance between our sinfulness and God's mercy. The second form will sound quite new. The priest says "Have mercy on us, O Lord," and the people respond, "For we have sinned against you." The priest then says, "Show us, O Lord, your mercy," and the people add, "And grant us your salvation." The third form of the penitential rite, which uses various invocations of Christ, has not changed much, though there will be an option to conclude each invocation in Greek rather than English: "Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison." The first two forms also conclude with these three responses, either in English or Greek.

The Glory to God

The changes in the Glory to God (Gloria) are mostly rearrangements of lines and phrases. The text we have been using was simplified a bit by reducing the repetitive ideas, but it is not inappropriate for a hymn of praise to have such repetitions. It will take us a little while to get used to the new word patterns, but the meaning has not changed significantly.

One of the more obvious changes comes in the first line. We currently say "and peace to his people on earth," while the new translation has "and on earth peace to people of good will." This translation is closer to the Latin text, though it is less faithful to the gospel text on which the Latin was originally based (See Luke 2:14). The Latin text puts the focus on the good will of human beings, while the gospel text focuses on God's good will toward humans.

The changes in this text should not be too hard for us to learn because the Glory should normally be sung and we will be learning new melodies that will support the new wording. This is a hymn of praise, so it doesn't work well as a recited text. It is one of the few times that we give ourselves over to simply praising God, with only a bit of petition thrown into the mix. It is good for us to take a few moments to glory in the mystery of God and God's love for us.